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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 OTTAWA 000288

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DEPT FOR AF/E NOLE GAREY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/25/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [PGOV](#) [SO](#) [CA](#)
SUBJECT: CANADA SUPPORTS FORMING CLUSTER GROUPS IN ICG ON
SOMALIA

REF: STATE 16168

Classified By: PolMinCouns Scott Bellard, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (U) This is an action request -- see para 9.

12. (C) Summary: Canada supports the establishment of cluster groups within the International Contact Group (ICG) on Somalia, although it is also open to other ideas to improve the ICG's effectiveness. Canada would be interested in joining one focused on "facilitating key transitional tasks," given its expertise in election monitoring, federalism, and constitution-drafting in conflict areas. Canada remains frustrated by its observer status in the ICG, but is still considering committing additional resources to Somalia. Canada likely would do more if it gained full membership status. End Summary.

CANADA SUPPORTS CLUSTER GROUPS, BUT OPEN TO OTHER IDEAS

13. (C) According to Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) Africa Bureau Director General David Angell, Canada shares the U.S. view that the ICG should be restructured to improve its effectiveness on the ground. He stated that Canada supports the idea of establishing cluster groups to achieve this, but is also open to other ideas. He pointed out that the ICG should be careful to ensure that a cluster group focused on "humanitarian response" would complement, rather than hinder or duplicate, the humanitarian work of other international organizations on the ground. Angell noted that Canada was still in the process of internally clearing an official expression of support for the cluster group proposal. He asked for clarification of when countries will be asked publicly to express government support for the proposal.

INTERESTED IN "FACILITATING KEY TRANSITIONAL TASKS" GROUP

14. (C) Angell said Canada would be most interested in joining the U.S.-proposed cluster group on "facilitating key transitional tasks," commenting that Canada's experience in targeted capacity-building would prove valuable to this group. He pointed to Canada's work on federalism, elections monitoring, and constitution-drafting in Iraq and elsewhere, and noted that there are Canadian organizations, e.g. the Forum of Federations, that could be helpful with this.

15. (C) Regarding the other suggested contact groups, Angell said that Canada would not be able to contribute as effectively to groups focused on "security and stability" or "political outreach," as Canada does not have representatives on the ground. He added that even a "humanitarian response" cluster group would not be a good fit, since Canada had

already provided its humanitarian assistance contribution of almost CAD 16 million (USD 16.03 million at current exchange rates).

OBSERVER STATUS FRUSTRATING...

16. (C) Angell emphasized that Canada remains frustrated by its status as an observer rather than a member of the ICG. He admitted that the ICG could not admit all of the countries that had expressed a desire to become members, but noted that Canada possesses unique expertise in democratic reform and capacity-building. He also pointed out that, while Canada will never be a top donor to Somalia, it possesses a special relationship with Somalia due to a Canadian Diaspora community of approximately 200,000 Somalis, as well as the fact that the Somali foreign minister and information minister have lived in Canada.

...AND HINDERING ATTEMPTS TO INCREASE ASSISTANCE
Q...AND HINDERING ATTEMPTS TO INCREASE ASSISTANCE

17. (C) Angell claimed that Canada potentially had "more money on the table" for Somalia, but he commented that Canada's lack of full membership in the ICG was hindering DFAIT's attempts to secure additional resources. Angell admitted that, in practice, the ICG treats observers on almost equal footing with members, but insisted that -- symbolically and politically -- there was a "world of difference." He underscored that even the Prime Minister's Office had asked DFAIT whether Canada had yet attained full membership. Angell noted that Canada was currently providing approximately CAD 500,000 (USD 501,000) per year in Somali assistance, and that, while this is a relatively small

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amount, it marked a "strategic" investment.

AFRICA AN ON-GOING PRIORITY FOR GOVERNMENT

18. (C) Angell acknowledged that Africa was not one of the government's "key priorities" of emerging markets, the Americas, and Afghanistan. He nonetheless asserted that Africa was an "ongoing priority" for the government, and noted that Canada was on track to be the first country to meet its Glenn Eagles commitment of doubling aid to Africa.

19. (C) Action requests: 1). Please advise desired date of public expressions of support (para 3). 2). Please advise if there is any willingness to reconsider the decision to deny Canada full membership status in the ICG. Embassy believes that Canada could offer the ICG not only a wealth of experience with capacity-building, but also a unique understanding of federalism, combined with potential additional resources.

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